

# PHOENIX Business Journal

Web Clipping

## Behavior Imaging considers Valley move with SARRC partnership, pilot program

🔑 **SUBSCRIBER CONTENT:** Nov 21, 2014, 4:00am MST



**Angela Gonzales**  
Senior Reporter-  
*Phoenix Business Journal*  
[Email](#) | [Twitter](#)

Behavior Imaging, a Boise, Idaho-based company teaming with [Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center](#) in Phoenix, is considering moving its headquarters to the Valley.

SARRC and Behavior Imaging are launching a pilot program in Maricopa County in January to help parents determine why their infants or toddlers are developing more slowly than other children. Behavior Imaging's technology will allow parents to use smartphones to submit video of their child's behavior, which then will be reviewed by SARRC clinicians to diagnose autism spectrum disorder.

The new program, called NODA (the Naturalistic Observation Diagnostic Assessment), can give parents a diagnosis within two to three weeks. Usually, it takes several months, said [Ron Oberleitner](#), CEO of Behavior Imaging.



 [Enlarge Photo](#)

Matthew Resnik, 23, was diagnosed with autism at age 2, prompting his mother, Denise Resnik, to co-found the Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center.

Working closely with SARRC is giving Oberleitner ideas about moving his company's base to Phoenix, or at least opening a satellite office here, he said.

"We are excited to open an office or have our headquarters there in Phoenix because of the significance of that metropolitan area for health care and more specifically autism treatment," he said. "We think it's strategic; we think it's good for our business. We know it's important to consider Phoenix or consider Arizona as a strategic headquarters for the NODA operations."

Oberleitner said he also is talking to venture capital firms in Phoenix.

He has 15 employees and plans to double that number as he brings the product to market.

Thirteen years ago, Oberleitner left his career as a vice president of product development in the medical device industry to help the autism community. His son, now 21, has autism.

After conducting 12 years of research, he developed the idea of allowing parents to record behaviors that clinicians look for when assessing autism.

His research was funded by the National Institute of Mental Health. So far, he has received \$2.2 million. He also has received an additional \$500,000 in funding from the same organization to improve pharmaceutical trials for autism using his company's technology.

Oberleitner has trademarked the technology with the name Behavior Imaging. The company plans to offer the test for about \$495, he said, compared with thousands of dollars for other tests.

Because the program is so new, insurance companies won't pay for the test. Oberleitner said he is working on the research required by insurers before they agree to pay.

He said he has begun talking to the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, the state's Medicaid program. Usually, if Medicare or Medicaid begins paying for a new treatment or diagnostic, commercial carriers soon follow.

Once the pilot program is completed, plans call for rolling it out nationwide, and eventually to other countries, Oberleitner said. For now, all clinical diagnosis will be conducted at SARRC, he said.

**Christopher Smith**, vice president and director of research for SARRC, said it usually takes parents three to six months for a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder if they're not worried about getting it covered by insurance. But AHCCCS patients have been told they have a wait of up to a year or longer, he said.